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FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION OF ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE GROUPS AND PERSONS

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Mrs. Faith Innerarity (Jamaica)

Addendum

Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons: elements for the agreed conclusions of the Commission

B. Enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with special needs

1. Poverty eradication should be the framework for enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability. Policies which address vulnerability must therefore be grounded in a proper understanding of poverty and social exclusion that enables people to move out of poverty.

2. Social development policies and programmes must create a favourable environment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, especially the poor, by incorporating their needs and interests and ensuring equal access and opportunities, as well as facilitating their contribution to national development.

3. The experiences of poor and marginalized people should be drawn on through participatory techniques to improve the effectiveness of policies and programmes.

4. Food security, adequate health care and access to water, sanitation, shelter, education and such resources as land and credit, as well as opportunities for involvement in community life, are essential.

5. Where formal social protection systems exist or are possible, they should play an important role in countering vulnerability and promoting employability; they should be extended, strengthened and targeted to the extent necessary to adequately meet needs; and, where necessary, they should be modernized and reformed to meet changing conditions. All Governments should, within their capacity and capability, establish or strengthen social safety nets for those in need of support and care.

6. It is important to establish mechanisms at different levels to enable civil society and the private sector to cooperate with Governments on policies and programmes to reduce vulnerability.

7. Strategies and policies to address vulnerability should recognize the differences between vulnerability in rural and urban areas.

8. Efforts to raise public awareness and sensitize the public towards improved access and participation of vulnerable persons should be initiated or strengthened.

9. To mobilize support and resources and maximize the effectiveness of programmes, it is essential to develop accounting tools that can comprehensively evaluate social investments and the returns on those investments.

10. Employment is essential to attacking poverty and exclusion. Employment strategies must aim to ensure that those who want to engage in productive, income-generating work have the opportunity to do so.

11. Measures should be taken to eliminate discrimination in employment based on disabilities, gender, race, ethnicity, social origins or any other grounds. Policies must address the special needs of groups who are most vulnerable in the labour market, and must allow them opportunities to develop and gain new skills.

12. Labour policies need to be particularly sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and should include provisions for equal remuneration, flexible working hours, adequate protection of part-time workers, and access to information and training.

13. In countries where unemployment among young people is high, redoubled efforts are required to expand meaningful employment opportunities for young people.

14. Attention should be given to reconciling professional activity and family responsibilities, for both men and women, inter alia, through affordable child care, family support and flexible working arrangements.

15. Recognition needs to be formally given to unpaid work that is socially useful and to voluntary activities so as to raise awareness of the importance of those activities, in particular in the context of reducing vulnerability and

dealing with its consequences. Work on appropriate methodologies to that end needs to be strengthened.

16. In countries where the informal sector in the economy is important, measures that promote an environment conducive for its development are critical, such as the establishment of self-generating employment, self-propelling growth and productive sustainable livelihoods, the development of cooperatives and small-scale enterprises, and the provision of access to micro-credit, particularly to improve the access of vulnerable and marginalized groups and make them more self-sufficient.

17. Early childhood education and development is a tool for reducing vulnerability and promoting social integration by providing all children with the basic skills to give them a firm foundation for further learning.

18. Particular attention needs to be given to the acquisition of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy for all and to equipping all people to adapt to technological, economic and social changes. Access to lifelong learning is important for maintaining and upgrading their employability.

19. The content of general education at all levels, starting from pre-school education, should contribute to mutual understanding, tolerance and skills supporting intercultural communication among young people from both majority and minority groups.

20. Professional conflict resolution services at the local, national and international levels should be established and strengthened for mediation and negotiation. These are cost-effective methods of resolving disputes and strengthening social harmony.

21. Cultural activities, community service and sport are among the activities that integrate people of all ages into society.

22. The international community should assist developing countries, upon request, in building their capacity to develop and implement policies and programmes aimed at removing the obstacles confronting all vulnerable and marginalized groups and facilitating their greater access to all aspects of society.